



Sam Brownback

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release

June 30, 1999

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SENATE PASSES HUMANITARIAN AID FOR SOUTHERN SUDANESE

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today was successful in passing as a part of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill (S. 1234), humanitarian assistance to the people in southern Sudan suffering under the rule of the National Islamic Front (NIF) government. S. 1234 passed the Senate tonight by a vote of 97-2.

"I just returned a couple weeks ago from the Sudan where I visited an oppressed but noble group of people who are suffering greatly at the hands of the ruling government in Khartoum," Brownback said. "I am pleased that we were able to pass legislation in the Senate today that will send humanitarian support to the southern Sudanese.

"After visiting the Sudan and personally witnessing the effects of the human rights abuses brutally practiced by the Sudanese government against its own people, I have called on the government to stop the terror of civilian bombing, slavery, government-manufactured famine, and forced religious conversions.

"In 1993, the U.S. officially placed the government of Sudan on a very short, very exclusive list of seven states in the world that sponsor terrorism. The Khartoum government is attempting to spread their form of government throughout all of Africa.

"They support terrorists who bomb our embassies and plot to murder the leaders of our allies. They support militia who steal women and children, branding and selling them like cattle in open-air slave markets. They deliberately withhold American food aid as a weapon of war against their own people and induce a government-manufactured famine that killed at least 100,000 last year.

"My trip to Sudan confirmed what I already had heard about -- this is among the most victimized civilian population in the world. The statistics attest -- 1.9 million dead in the last decade, 4.3 million pushed out of their ancient homelands and forced to live on the edge of starvation -- making this the largest refugee population in the world," Brownback said.

The U.S. currently gives aid to Sudan, but it is primarily distributed through Operation Lifeline Sudan, and is given to those who support the Khartoum government. Under this Brownback language, humanitarian aid would expand direct assistance, in the form of food, to the southern Sudanese.

Brownback is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and sits on the African Affairs Subcommittee. He is also a commissioner on the Helsinki Commission (the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe).